Studland

1909

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury. Oct 5

My Billy

I have only time for a line before the post goes. Norton has just gone. He has been besieged since yesterday afternoon by telegrams & letters from Lytton & James asking him to go away with Lytton to some health resort for a few days. Lytton seems to be in a melancholic state & to imagine himself very ill. James says there

is nothing really the
matter but that he has
got into a hypochondriacal
state - & as they both
seemed to think that the
only remedy was for Norton
to go off somewhere with him
at once. he has had to
go. He asked me to tell
you that he must be able
to dine with you on
Thursday in consequence.
I wonder if you have
seen Lytton at all or

Parnell. If so you may have some information as to the true state of things. It all sounds rather a storm about nothing.

No letter from you today. I have no news. We had a thorough airing of the great Walter Lamb question last night & all expressed our honest opinions freely.

I must stop as I have numerous letters to write & must be needs on Thursday. Yrs VB.

(36) (1908)

[Friday]

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Christmas Day.

My Billy.

I can only send the most inadequate answers to your letters. I have had two today to make up for none yesterday. Also our presents have come & on the night day too. Perhaps I ought not to mention them. But we - critical & fastidious as we are - were quite overcome by the beauty of the tray. It is really lovely

we shall have coffee brought up on it. Evidently your gentleman in Kensington Sq. is a fraud. but I am afraid he may have ruined you. in fact I feel sure he must have. Even your genius can't have discovered such an object for less than — I tremble to say what. You set a very good standard at present in the Bell family. which this year has been surprisingly

well lived up to by Lorna & Dorothy. They have given me a really very nice old embroidered collar. Mr Ball however has brought down the family reputation by giving me two awful little books on Velasquez & Ballin ink atrocious coloured reproductions - about the beastliest.

I also had a Christmas card or rather book - "Economics in Art" by Ruskin from Sydney Lazarus, & a card from Peter Studd.

If you really knew what I was feeling you would not pity me for having Julian. There is

nothing else to do here & he is on the whole very good & very attractive. I hardly have more to do with him than usual by day. only bathing & dressing him. So you need not commiserate me this time! Evidently Clive has calmed down & I suppose your correspondence can now cease. I shouldn't tell her anything about your meeting with H.J.: She will only write at the thought of them & invent theories to explain all that happens if you do.

It's very kind of you to take such pains. Do send me an effectual letter - chaste centipede

V.B.

52

Telegraph and Station } Seend

1909?

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Dec. 26th

My Billy.

No letter from you today. but there is only one post in. which I suppose accounts for it. It is a perfectly beastly day here. cold & grey. & looks as if it really might fulfil the constant prophecy of snow. Clive has gone for a long walk & I am staying luxuriously at home. It really looks like it (no more. beside

if I did so I should
have to go with Lorna &
I don't know what we
should find to say to
each other. I have had
another present. or rather
Julian has - a little coat
worked for him by Snow.
That is what you ought
to do. Some people called
Forrester are coming to
dine here tonight & to-
morrow we go to lunch
with the Ravenhills &
finish the extent of our
festivities. I feel quite

brainless after listening to
family conversations here
for long. I really think
families are milled in
institutions in spite of all
your arguments in favour
of them. (You did argue in
favour of them not long
ago.) Even in the most
highly intelligent men, like
ours, many vices seem
inevitable, at any rate in
the commanding members
of the family. When one
sees these vices exaggerated
here it becomes appalling.
I suppose with only two
children one may hope
to avoid some of it. But
only I expect if the children

live away from home a good deal. I see Julian will have to be sent on his travels when he reaches an independent age. & Clarissa shall go on hers too.

Is your novel a work of genius at present or is it nearly going into the fire? I hear from Madge that Janet is going to come to us from the 4th to the 11th. What shall I do with her? Will you help me? I suppose the Zoo. the pantomime, etc. Perhaps you'll like such treats. I wonder why I write to you.

Yr VB.

(1909)

Telegraph and Station Seend.

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Dec 27

My Billy.

I have had two letters from you from Lelant. It sounds too divine to be sitting in the sun & drinking in that delicious air which always seems like melted champagne. I envy you - How maddening it is to think of the time one wastes in this world - here sitting making conversation to Mrs Bell instead of talking Lyon in Cornwall as we might be. Damn. To day we

lunched with the Raven Hills
[redacted] which is always rather
amusing. Mrs R. H. had
spent a short time with the
Balls in Scotland last summer
& confided to me her views
of them which are practically
the same as mine. So we
enjoyed talking each other
all their faults. Lorna's
especially. She said that
in Scotland they thought of
nothing but polishing their
nails & showing off their
unmentionable pairs of
shoes. For they also pride

themselves greatly on their feat. In fact their self-content altogether the limit amazing. You can imagine how I enjoyed all this. & much more of the same kind. We spent more than an hour in hearty abuse.

Last night Dorothy's young man. Mr Dawes. came to tea & stayed to supper. He is very ugly & stupid but not so bad in the whole. According to Mrs R. H. Lorna & Dorothy had invited him to all dances etc in town, at the same time giving out that Dorothy had no thought of marrying him. In consequence he had been very much laughed at by their young men & had avoided

Dorothy for some time. Now however he seems to have reappeared so perhaps it will end in a proposal. They live in an odd world which seems to touch ours at no point. I am coming up on Thursday afternoon I expect. I haven't heard from Norton yet but from what you say I suppose he can come. You seem to have had what might have been a very amusing evening spoilt by Cole. He is too intolerable. I suppose your character is ruined. But after all you haven't much. I wonder whether Duncan Grant suspected when he found you & Lytton together. So glad that you are still at Lelant. We must certainly go there in the spring. Yours VB.

(37)

[Cleeve House -

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.. Dec 29

Bewitching Belle..

Itns dozn manage
to file papers with your
reflections? I had
two letters from you
today which gave me
great pleasure to read
& fill me with amaze-
ment to think that
for you had no news
at all. Cline says every
intelligent person al.?

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

way, has news. Much
I suppose is true. But
when I have no news
I can't write pages
about it. In any
case I should have no
time to do it now for
I have only 5 minutes
before the post goes.
It has been snowing
all day & so I haven't
been out. The Raven

Hills have had to give
up coming to dine
& we have all done
nothing. Tomorrow
Juliana's nurse comes
home which will be
a mercy. Mary really
has not the burden
you seem to think.

I shall be very glad
to get back to London
again. Will you
come & dine with
us at 8 on Friday?

I hope we shall have
the pleasure of
seeing a good deal
of the singers on
Admiral's visit to avoy
for Sunday

Yours
V.B.

T. PARSON 3.2.73